DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 242 223 FL 014 303

AUTHOR King, Edith W.; Houlton, David
TITLE Implications of Britain's Mother Tongue Project for American Multiethnic Education.
PUB DATE 24 Apr 84
NOTE 35p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 24, 1984).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingual Education; Community Support; Comparative Analysis; *Cultural Pluralism; Curriculum Development; Educational Benefits; *English (Second Language); Ethnic Relations; Foreign Countries; Immigrants; Language of Instruction; *Multicultural Education; *Native Language Instruction; Parent Attitudes; *Policy Formation; Primary Education; Program Development; Program Effectiveness; Teacher Developed Materials; Teacher Education; Teacher Responsibility
IDENTIFIERS *Great Britain; United States

ABSTRACT

The multiethnic situation in American schools in the 1980s can be compared to that of Britain in the 1960s, when a sudden influx of non-English-speaking children in great numbers taxed the resources of an educational system dedicated to the English language. Arguments favoring multicultural education are increasing in both countries, and the need for a multilingual curriculum and parent involvement are also recognized. In 1981 Britain's School Council undertook a major program to offer assistance in the form of resources and guidelines to teachers wishing to extend the native language skills of their primary students. Teachers developed instructional materials promoting intercultural communication, and materials for other teachers, especially those not speaking the students' native languages. American programs and publications have focused on similar issues in minority language instruction. However, developing a unified policy in conditions of wide diversity is a complex undertaking, involving immigrant parent attitudes, minority isolation, discrimination, and economic disadvantagement. American school districts are choosing a middle ground, allowing students to retain literacy in their native languages while providing English instruction. As the debate continues in both countries, more research, curricular materials, and teacher education are needed. (MSE)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED242223

# IMPLICATIONS OF BRITAIN'S MOTHER TONGUE PROJECT FOR AMERICAN MULTIETHNIC EDUCATION

by

Edith W. King
School of Education
University of Denver

and

David Houlton
Director
Mother Tongue Project
Schools Council, Britain

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Edith W. King

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

FL014303

A paper prepared for the American Educational Research Association Meetings, New Orleans, La. April 24, 1984.

No portion of this paper may be duplicated without permission. Curriculum materials and Teachers' Guides published in Britain.

Title: Impiications of Britain's Mother Tongue Project for American Multiethnic Education

Authors: Edith W. King
School of Education
University of Denver

and

David Houlton
Director
Schools Council
Mother Tongue Project, Britain

"Rising Immigration Tide Strains Nation's Schools" states the headline of Gene Maeroff's article in a special, Fall '83 education supplement of the New York Times. The education reporter goes on to point out that America's classrooms are confronted by the biggest influx of immigrant students since early in the century. So once again, American elementary and secondary schools are being turned into "meling pots" struggling to absorb the hundreds of thousands of immigrant youngsters. (Maeroff, N.Y. Times, August 21, 1983, Education Supplement, p. 1)

The situation in American schools in the 1980s parallels the experiences of British schools in the 1960s. The sudden influx of non-English speaking children in large numbers taxes the resources of the educational enterprise dedicated to the promulgation of the English language in spoken and written form as well as the culture, heritage, history, tradition and customs embedded in that language. And educators know that the task of helping fit these immigrant youngsters into the society falls primarily on the nation's schools. As Maeroff puts it "the implications of having to absorb both immigrant and native-born students with limited English proficiency are enormous--affecting curriculum, costs, the availability of teaching jobs, and educational and social philosophy." (P. 37) A statement as applicable to British schools as those in America.

In the past in British and American schools, children speaking a language other than English were seen not as possessing a set of valuable skills but as struggling against an impediment that needed to be eradicated before they could successfully acquire the English language and thus take advantage of the learning opportunities available in the society. But in more recent years a shift in thinking has been underway. Now instead of regarding the mother tongue as a barrier to learning English, more educators and classroom teachers are coming to see it as providing children with a valuable foundation of confidence at using language and understanding how language works.

Today the arguments for a multicultural curriculum reflecting children's cultural experiences are fast gaining ground in the United States and in Britain. However, language and culture are inseparable as teachers were soon to discover through their efforts to incorporate aspects of their pupils home cultures into the day to day work of the classroom. Gradually, then, they are recognizing that the multicultural curriculum should also be a multilingual one; and the development of relevant classroom strategies is becoming a major priority.

In dealing with the new waves of immigrant pupils schools quickly recognized that they also were becoming deeply involved with the parents, the families of limited or non-English speaking children. If there was any doubt about the views of these parents toward mother tongue maintenance for their children, evidence of their commitment was to be found in the community-run mother tongue classes operating outside normal school hours in ethnic minority communities in the United States and in Britain. It is evident that parents are deeply concerned with maintenance of the mother tongue to facilitate communication with their children and to encourage children to participate and communicate at family gatherings. Further, parents wish their children to be able to keep contact with the homeland and with relatives and friends that

still reside there. Parents of these children are often worried about the loss of self esteem and identification with the traditions and culture of the ethnic group. On the other hand, most teachers are preoccupied with the social, psychological and general educational performance of their pupils. Sociologists point out that there is no accepted concept of hyphenated identities in England as there is in America such as the Mexican-American or the Italian-American. Further, few minority cultures and languages are valued or publicly recognized in the wider British society.

To underscore the importance of the maintenance of one's mother tongue, Verity Khan of the Linguistic Minorities Project writes:

> The fact that many children of non-English mother tongues in British schools stop speaking (and at times refuse to acknowledge the existence of) their mother tongue is not solely and simply an indication of dramatic language shift. It also indicates their appreciation of the relative value accorded to the two languages in the school and the wider society as a whole. In some cases minority children refuse to speak the mother tongue at home except when essential, for example, with a non-English-speaking parent. This situation and the actual dominance of English and loss of mother tongue can cause the loss of total communication between parents and children in minority families even before the child starts school.
>
> (Khan, 1980, p. 83-84)

Her statement reflects the deep concern of educators in English speaking nations about the non-English speaking children in their schools.

## A Response to Mother Tongue Teaching in Britain

As a result of this concern in Britain in 1981 the School Council, with support from the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) and funding from the European Commission, (EEC), felt the climate was right to launch a major

national project which would offer assistance, in the form of resources and guidelines, to teachers wishing to extend the mother tongue skills of their primary age children. From the outset it has been clear that the Schools Council Mother Tongue Project cannot focus its efforts on any single category of teachers since three broad groups share responsibility for the education of bilingual children.

The first comprises those teachers who contribute their time and expertise, often voluntarily, to the community mother tongue schools that meet at evenings and weekends. The second is the steadily growing group employed by Local Education Authorities (LEAs) as mother tongue teaching specialists in mainstream primary schools. The third, and numerically the largest, consists of all those primary teachers whose work brings them into regular contact with pupils from different linguistic backgrounds and who therefore exert some influence on how children perceive their bilingualism, and the status that is ascribed to their languages within the school. Three groups of teachers, often from different professional backgrounds, facing varied teaching situations and each defining their own classroom priorities, yet all having complementary roles in aiding children's mother tongues.

The project has set itself the task of collaborating with all three groups in order to devise resources and teaching strategies which will meet their needs and circumstances.

Bengali and Greek have been taken as the focus languages for the project's main materials output. Chosen because of the size of their population in the London area where the project is based, these also offer interesting linguistic contrasts and similarities which will enable the experience of working with them to be more wisely generalizable to other community languages. Indeed a major aim is to extend the process of materials development in Bengali and

Greek so as to provide a framework which will assist bilingual teachers generally in preparing their own materials for classroom use.

From September 1981 to July 1982 was a development period during which the project team worked closely with groups of Bengali and Greek-speaking teachers in order to produce a collection or oracy and literacy materials which reflect the experiences of children growing up in an urban multicultural environment.

The following school year saw draft versions of the materials undergoing classroom trials in the London area, the bilingual teachers using them being, in the main, those who were previously involved in their development. Although primarily intended for evaluating the materials in use, this trial year had the additional aim of providing the team with insight into other aspects of mother tongue teaching such as, how schools might organize, how children are likely to benefit, and what sort of In-Service support needs to be available for all members of staff. Guidance on such issues is frequently being sought by schools and LEAs, and so as part of the final year's output the team is hoping to be able to pass on the experiences they have gained in the form of a collection of case study reports drawn from the participating schools.

Although Bengali and Greek have considerable statistical importance in the London area, at a national level they are just two among several major community languages; and by comparison with others, in certain areas of Britain they are spoken by only a small proportion of the ethnic minority population. It becomes all the more important, then, that bilingual teachers of other languages should be able to draw upon the project's work and feel that its materials package has some applications in their own spheres of interest.

This has become known as the 'transferability' aspect of the project. It is being approached in a variety of ways. One starting point was to incorporate an element of intercultural exchange into the Bengali and Greek strands thus enabling a young Greek-speaker, for instance, to read a story in Greek about a Bangladeshi child's first day at school in a new country, or by giving a Bengali-speaking child a chance to learn about a Cypriot wedding ceremony. A further step has been for the project team to make available some of their materials to bilingual teachers of other languages, Portuguese and Urdu for instance, who are now using them in their own classes having carried out any necessary translation. Later, details of how they used and adapted the materials will be collated by the project team and together with the results of monitoring the original development process, will form the basis for a handbook of guidelines on preparing resources for mother tongue teaching at the primary level.

Supporting the Multilingual Classroom Teacher

Classroom teachers in multicultural primary schools face a wide variety of situations. Many work with children from a range of linguistic backgrounds. Others draw their pupils from communities where a particular language is in the majority. Some teach classes in which ethnic minority children are in a distinct minority.

All this adds up to a heterogeneous group. But what these teachers are likely to have in common is that they have little, if any, competence in the languages of their pupils and therefore would appreciate guidance on how to bring language diversity on to the classroom agenda. Here, three publications are planned by the project:

The first--"Supporting Children's Bilingualism"--is already available from Longman. It is the outcome of a seminar held by the project in the Summer of 1982 and sets out some of the issues which schools and LEAs will need to

examine in order to provide teachers with the supportive structure that is necessary if they are to be able to respond effectively to their pupils' languages. Included are sections on--Why support children's bilingualism?; The need for a school and LEA policy; In-Service training; Resources; Links with ethnic minority communities. A final section poses some discussion points and offers suggestions on how the document could be used locally as an aid to In-Service Training, or in preparing school or LEA policies. See London Times article (Appendix).

Insert here diagram, "Why Support Bilingualism"

The second--"Teaching in the Multilingual Classroom" -- is to be the main handbook for teachers in linguistically mixed classrooms. It is a compilation of activities undertaken by primary teachers in eleven LEAs between January 1982 and January 1983. Throughout, the emphasis is on self-help, the intention being to demonstrate how teachers can create an atmosphere of linguistic awareness and sharing, calling upon the range of human and material resources that are available to most multicultural schools. The main sections are--Finding out about children's languages; Language diversity across the curriculum; Working with parents; Using mother tongue stories; Learning children's languages; Looking at resources.

National trials of the handbook will end in December of 1983. It will then be revised in the light of teachers' observations, with a view to it being published by Longman in 1984.

The third--"The Children's Language Project"--comprises a series of activity cards that are the outcome of a joint venture involving the project and the Language Information Network Co-ordination. They are designed to

Page 13 from "SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S BILINGUALISM" a Schools Council Programme 4 pamphlet by David Houlton and Richard Willey.

WHY SUPPORT BILINGUALISM?

**Benefits for all children**

1. Supports confidence in own language repertoire
2. Increases language awareness
3. Contributes to combating racism
4. Increases awareness of cultural diversity
5. Increases communication between different cultural groups

**Benefits for bilingual children**

1. Support for learning
2. Aiding intellectual/ cognitive development
3. Supporting self-esteem/ confidence in own ethnicity
4. Supporting relationship with family and community
5. Extending vocational and life options

**BASIC PRINCIPLES**

1. Equality of opportunity
2. Developing skills and talents that children bring to school
3. Responding positively to a multicultural society

**Benefits for the teacher and the school**

1. Increases knowledge of and relationship with individual pupils
2. Recognition of pupils' family/ community as a resource
3. Increases teacher awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity
4. Strengthens school/community links
5. Contributes to multicultural ethos of the school

Copyright © 1983
Schools Council Publications

encourage children to investigate their own patterns of language use as well as the languages they encounter all around them at school, at home and in the community. (See Appendix for examples)

There are four cards in the series, each with a specific theme--Languages at home; Languages at school; Languages in the neighborhood; Languages around the world. Classroom trials have now been completed and, after a period of revision, the cards will be offered to a commercial publisher.

How do these British efforts relate to American programs in multilingual education?

The Asian and Minority Group Project of California

What approaches are being used in American schools to educate non-English speaking children? A publication by the Office of Bilingual Bicultural Education, California State Department of Education delineates four such approaches.

> In school situations, language minority students are exposed to English in basically four ways:
>
> 1) submersion classes;
> 2) grammar-based ESL; (English as a Second Language)
> 3) communicative-based ESL;
> 4) sheltered English classes.
>
> A brief description of these four approaches is as follows:
>
> Submersion classes are situations in which teachers speak in a native speaker to native speaker register as if all of the students in the class were native speakers of English

Grammar-based ESL classes focus on phonology and syntax and emphasize learning language rules through inductive (grammar-translation) or deductive (audiolingual or cognitive code) methods.

Communicative-based ESL, by contrast, places emphasis on language use and functions. This type of instruction focuses on basic communicative competence, rather than learning grammar rules.

Sheltered English approaches deliver subject matter in the second language. In these situations L2 acquirers are usually grouped together, special materials are provided, students are allowed to speak in their native language (although the teacher always models native speaker or near-native speaker speech), and a native speaker-to-non-native speaker register ("motherese" or "foreigner talk") is used by the teacher.

The research suggests that communicative-based ESL and sheltered English instruction effectively promote the acquisition of Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) in English. Grammar-based ESL and submersion classes have been found to be less effective in promoting such skills. (Cummins, Krashen and Terrell in Handbook for Teaching Vietnamese Speaking Students, p. 35-36, 1983)

The material quoted above was excerpted from the "Handbook for Teaching Vietnamese Children." This is one of the series of handbooks published in

1983 by the California State Department of Education to meet the needs of rapidly increasing minority language populations in the state. The handbooks focus on various language groups including: Vietnamese, Cantonese, Korean, Philipino, Mandarin, Japanese, Portuguese, Ilocano Punjabi, Armenian, Laotian, Cambodian, and Samoan. Each handbook addresses the unique historical, socio-cultural and linguistic characteristics of each language group. The handbooks also provide educational resources such as community organizations and classroom instructional materials. They are designed to assist bilingual/ESL teachers, counselors, schools administrators and teacher training institutions in establishing programmatic, curricular and instructional policies.

The linguistic experts who developed the theoretical bases for this minority language instruction programs set forth in Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework, advocate additive bilingualism and stress on maintenance of the mother tongue. Writing in the Handbook for Teaching Vietnamese Students, they state that opportunities to develop cognitive and academic languages skills in Vietnamese are naturally not available to students in most communities in California therefore, parents and educators must work together to design and implement such opportunities. Further, cognitive and academic language skills not learned in Vietnamese can easily be added in English by specially designed instruction at school. "If students are to benefit from their bilingualism, attention to Vietnamese language development and English language acquisition is necessary." (p. 42). Office of Biling./Bicult. Educ., Calif. State Dept. of Educ. Sacramento, CA.) Hence, we can recognize a similarity in philosophy, goals and theoretical framework between the Schools Council Mother Tongue Project in Britain and the programs for Asian language speakers in California just described.

The Complexities of Mother Tongue Teaching Under Conditions of Wide Diversity

The circumstances of defining a unified policy for mother tongue teaching or even a general advocacy of ESL programs in American schools, today, becomes more and more problematical. What do educators propose? What do parents want? What will the Federal, state or local authorities fund? It seems very trying for those responsible for the integration of the immigrant youngsters into schools across the United States to determine.

A thoughtful and indepth study of Southeast Asian refugee parents in the Pacific Northwest sheds further light on the mother tongue teaching controversy. Mary Blakely of the College of Education, University of Oregon, interviewed Southeast Asian refugee parents to obtain their perspectives on formal education for their children attending the local schools. She further augmented her interpretation of the survey data with two prior years of participant observation fieldwork in the setting. The main purpose of her project was to help the school district learn more about how the refugee families adjusted to American schools. Emphasis in the study was placed on the parents' perception of the language environment in the schools, cross-cultural communication, parent involvement in schools and bilingualism. Refugee groups included Chinese, Vietnamese, Lao, Mien and Khmer speakers.

This Oregon school district had no recent experience with bilingual education prior to the refugee program. After the arrival of the linguistically diverse families from Southeast Asia, the school district applied for and received Federal funds to implement a "transitional bilingual" program in the schools for the children of these families. The objective was to promote a "language shift" from mother tongue to the dominant language of the local society. The program and the students were evaluated only on the basis of

English language proficiency, not on achievement of native language literacy skills. (Blakely, 1983.)

After two years of the program, Blakely asked parents if they thought their children should learn to read and write their native languages as well as English? Each family was asked to respond to the question in reference to the language they regarded as their "own." The refugee parents across language groups generally gave one answer for their older children and another for the younger primary school age children. Blakely reports that half the parents noted that older children already were literate, so there was no need for them to receive native langauge instruction at school. The majority (60 percent) said they wanted their younger children to learn to read and write the native language. One Chinese-Vietnamese mother state "I would like the school to open a Chinese class. It would be good for all the children. The Americans, too." This mother noted that in our contemporary world Chinese might be a more widely used language than Vietnamese. Chinese parents also mentioned the intellectual value of becoming literate in two languages.

However, a Lao-speaking father was most adamant in his response in opposition to native language teaching. Through an interpreter he stated:

> Write down that I want only English at school! This not Laos. There is no reason to learn to read Lao here. There are no Lao books in America. Here my boys need English. They are learning English well at school and I am happy. To get a good job they must know how to read and write English.
>
> (Blakely, p. 62)

Blakely concluded that no parents surveyed argued against English literacy for their children, but some parents doubted the value of being literate in an

additional language. Like immigrant groups before them in America they recognized the immediate needs for English languge proficiency. (Blakely, 1983)

These attitudes were further confirmed during an interview with the ESL Consultant for the Aurora, Colorado, Schools, who described his school district's program for Korean-speaking new immigrant children. He stressed that families from Korea wanted an "American education" for their children. Parents wanted their children to be immersed in the American tradition and speak only American English. Yet he noted that ten or fifteen years later, when the families had been in the U.S. for awhile, they spoke of feelings of regret for not teaching their children about their Korean heritage and the language, as they and their children soon forgot the traditions and culture of the mother country.

Another argument that confounds the issue of mother tongue teaching in the schools of the United States is the one of ethnic minority isolation, and hence discrimination and economic disadvantagement. Writing in an issue of the Harvard Education Review on the bilingual education controversy, and particularly how it effects Spanish speakers), Ortheguy points out that to the extent that bilingual programs help maintain communication in Spanish among Hispanic children, they may also curb the process of assimilation by identifying Hispanics as a distinct group. "Conventional wisdom holds that as long as a group remains distinguished from the larger society, its members will remain poor. Because of their experience with racism in this country, many Hispanics have long ago given up the hope of disappearing as a distinct group." (Ortheguy, 1982 p. 312).

Whither Mother Tongue Teaching?

Where does this leave us in this discussion of issues on mother tongue teaching in Britain and the United States? Strong evidence is set forth by

The School's Council Mother Tongue Project for supporting children's bilingualism. The Project's position statement points out that bilingualism benefits all children by supporting confidence in one's own language repertoire, increasing language awareness, and awareness of cultural diversity, combating prejudice and discrimination and increasing communication between different cultural groups. Bilingualsm benefits bilingual children by supporting learning, aiding intellectual and cognitive development, supporting self-esteem and confidence in one's own ethnicity, supporting relationship with one's family and ethnic community and extending vocational and life options.

Bilingualism benefits teachers and the schools by increasing knowledge of and relationships with individual pupils, by recognizing pupil's family and community as school resources, by increasing teacher awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity, strengthening school/community ties and by contributing to the multicultural ethos of the school. Finally bilingualism and the inclusion of mother tongue teaching promotes equality of educational opportunity, and develops skills and talent that children bring to school. Bilingualism is a positive response to a multiethnic society.

In America in 1983, school districts across the country, confronted with raising immigrant populations of limited English-speaking students are opting for a middle ground, allowing students to retain literacy in their native language while helping them to learn English. School administrators are recognizing the advantages of bilingualism or multilingualism for all students, native North Americans as well as new immigrants.

> The question of whether to encourage students to perpetuate fluency in their native tongue has thrust the schools into a larger debate over the future of the United States as a

> monolingual society. Critics charge that the dominance of English could be weakened and national cohesiveness could be threatened if educators do not handle this issue carefully.
>
> (Maeroff, 1983 p. 67)

This debate continues on both sides of the Atlantic. But the need for more research, curricular materials and teacher education is evident.

## References


Banks, James. (1981) Multiethnic Education: Theory and Practice. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Blakely, Mary. (1983) Southeast Asian Refugee Parents: An Inquiry Into Home-School Communication and Understanding. Anthropology and Education (Vol. 14, No. 1, Spring, 1983.) pp. 43-68.

Brown, Daphne. (1979) Mother Tongue to English. London: Cambridge University Press.

California State Dept. of Educ. Office of Bilingual, Bicultural Education. (1981) Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework. Sacramento, California.

_____(1983) A Handbook for Teaching Vietnamese Speaking Students. Sacramento, Calif.

_____(1983) A Handbook for Teaching Korean-Speaking Students. Sacramento, California.

Cummins, James (1981) The Role of Primary Language Development in Promoting Educational Success for Language Minority Students. Schooling and Language Minority Students: Los Angeles, Calif. Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center, California State Univ. of Los Angeles.

Epstein, Noel, (1977) Language, Ethnicity and the Schools. Washington, D.C. Institute for Educational Leadership, George Washington University

Fishman, Joshua. (1976) Bilingual Education: An International Sociological Perspective. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers.

Gracia, Ricardo. (1982) Teaching in a Pluralistic Society. New York: Harper and Row.

Golden, John. (1983) Interviews with ESL Consultant Aurora, Colorado Public Schools. Aurora, Colorado.

Gollnick, D. and Chinn, P. (1983) Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society. St. Louis, Mosby Publ. Co.

Houlton, David. (1983) Schools Council Mother Tongue Project. Multicultural Teaching for Practitioners in School and Community (Volume 1, No. 3, Summer, 1983 pp. 23-26.) Stoke-on-Trent. Trentham Books.

Khan, Verity S. (1980) The Mother Tongue of Linguistic Minorities in Multicultural England. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development (Vol., No., pp. 71-88.) Clevedon, Avon, Multilingual Matters.

King, Edith (1980) Teaching Ethnic Awareness. Methods and Materials for the Elementary School. Glenview, Ill. Good Year Books.

King, Edith. (1982) Teaching in Ethnically Diverse Classrooms. Denver, Colorado, University of Denver.

Krashen, Stephen D. (1981) Bilingual Education and Second Language Acquisition Theory. Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework. Los Angeles, California Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center, California State University, Los Angeles.

Maeroff, Gene. (1983) Rising Immigration Tide Strains Nation's Schools. New York Times Education Summer Survey (Section 12, August 21, 1983.) New York, New York Times.

Ortheguy, Ricardo. (1982) Thinking About Bilingual Education: A Critical Appraisal. Harvard Educational Review. (Vol. 52, No. 3, August, 1982 pp. 301-314.) Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University.

Rudensky, Maria. (1983) Federal Education Program Aid Refugee Children. Momentum, Journal of the National Catholic Education Association. (Vol. 14, No. 1, Feb. 1983, pp. 22-27.) Washington, D.C. National Catholic Education Association.

Terrell, Tracy D. (1981) The Natural Approach in Bilingual Education. Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Approach. Los Angeles, Calif. Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center, California State University, Los Angeles.

Title: Implications of Britain's Mother Tongue Project for American Multiethnic Education

Authors: Edith W. King
School of Education
University of Denver

and

David Houlton
Director
Schools Council
Mother Tongue Project, Britain

Abstract:

This paper discusses issues involved in mother tongue teaching in the schools of Britain and the United States. British approaches to bilingual education, curricular materials and teaching methods are highlighted in the description of the Schools Council Mother Tongue Project. Comparisons with American projects and studies are made. The controversy surrounding mother tongue teaching in both nations is considered.

APPENDIX

London Times - June 24, 1983

PRIMARY

# New policy sought on bilingual classes

by Diane Spencer

The Schools Council is calling for a coordinated policy on bilingual education in primary schools from the Department of Education and Science and local education authorities.

In a report published today, the council says at least 100 mother tongues are spoken every day in the nation's classrooms.

Eighteen reasons why children's bilingualism should be supported are listed in the report. They include: helping to fight racism, increasing language awareness and self confidence, and strengthening school and community links.

The report also looks at current practice and thinking in the field of mother tongue teaching and sets out the issues which schools and education authorities should examine when formulating policy.

"It is not a definitive statement on the subject, but rather a resource for colleagues who are beginning to consider the type of supportive structure that can be provided to assist teachers in taking greater account of the language skills which their children possess, but which can easily be left at the school gates".

The report advises schools to foster links with centres organized by local communities to teach mother tongues as they contain a considerable pool of bilingual expertise.

Teachers should also take more account of the views of ethnic groups and parents, it says. "No doubt in many schools this liaison will require extreme professional sensitivity if the all-round benefits of recognizing linguistic diversity are to be fully understood."

The authors, David Houlton and Richard Willey, call for reforms in both initial and in-service training to help teachers develop bilingual teaching skills.

"All teachers, regardless of the range of their own language knowledge, have an important role to play in giving recognition and support to the language that their children bring to school," they say.

*Mother-tongue teaching: a sensitive approach needed*

*Supporting children's bilingualism*, David Houlton and Richard Willey, Longman Resources Unit, 33-35 Tanner Row, York YO1 1JP, £1.75.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Samara in the Mother Tongue Project
Wood Green School, Haringey
June, 1983

photos by
Hasan Yahya
UWIC of Dundee

# The Mother Tongue Project Materials

Schools Council:
Mother Tongue Project
Robert Montefiore School
Underwood Road
London E1 5AD
Telephone 01-377 9904

This project was set up in 1981 in response to the call from mainstream and community language schools for (a) curricular resources for use by bilingual teachers to assist them to extend children's proficiency in their mother tongue, and (b) guidance for non-bilingual class teachers in the mainstream system on what they might do to support children's use of their mother tongue.

It is being funded by the European Economic Community, the Schools Council and the Inner London Education Authority.

The project has already produced various materials. There has been so much demand from people to know about these materials that we have produced this catalogue to describe the output (existing and planned) of the project. The illustrations in the catalogue are taken from the project's materials.

During 1982-1983 these materials are in their trial stage. In 1983-1984 they will be revised in light of these trials and will then be made widely available.

SEMINAR REPORT:

Supporting Children's Bilingualism: Policy issues for primary schools and LEAs. This book is the outcome of a seminar held by the project in the summer term of 1982. It sets out some of the issues which schools and LEAs will need to examine in order to offer teachers the support that is necessary if they are to be able to respond effectively to language diversity. Included are the following sections: "Why support children's bilingualism?; The need for a school and LEA policy; In-service training; Resources; Links with ethnic minority communities". A final section lists some discussion points and suggests how the document could be used, at local level, as an aid to in-service training, or in preparing school or LEA policies.

"Supporting children's bilingualism" (May 1983). (About £2) from Longman Publications, 33-35 Tanner Row, York, Yorkshire YO1 1JP.

PROJECT NEWSLETTER

The team produce a termly newsletter giving up-to-date reports of the project's progress and details of local initiative in supporting minority languages.

PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

This describes the background to the project, its work in Greek and Bengali, its proposed work on transferring ideas to other language groups and its work with non-bilingual teachers.

Both the newsletter and information sheet can be obtained free from the Schools Council Mother Tongue Project at Robert Montefiore School, Underwood Road, London E1.

## TEACHING IN THE MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM

This is a handbook for teachers in linguistically mixed classrooms. It is a compilation of strategies devised by groups of primary teachers, in eleven LEAs, between January 1982 and January 1983. The emphasis throughout is on self-help, the intent being to demonstrate from case studies of classroom initiatives how teachers can create an atmosphere of linguistic awareness and sharing, calling upon the variety of human and material resources that are available to most schools. The main sections in the handbook are: "Finding out about your children's languages; Working with the comunity; Collecting and using mother tongue stories; Learning and using your children's languages; Developing resources; Language diversity across the curriculum".

It is hoped that the handbook will be published in 1984 during the project's final year. Local trials and evaluation, will enable teachers who were not involved in its development to have access to it as a classroom resource and to assist in shaping its final form.

## TEACHING MATERIALS FOR BILINGUAL TEACHERS OF BENGALI AND GREEK

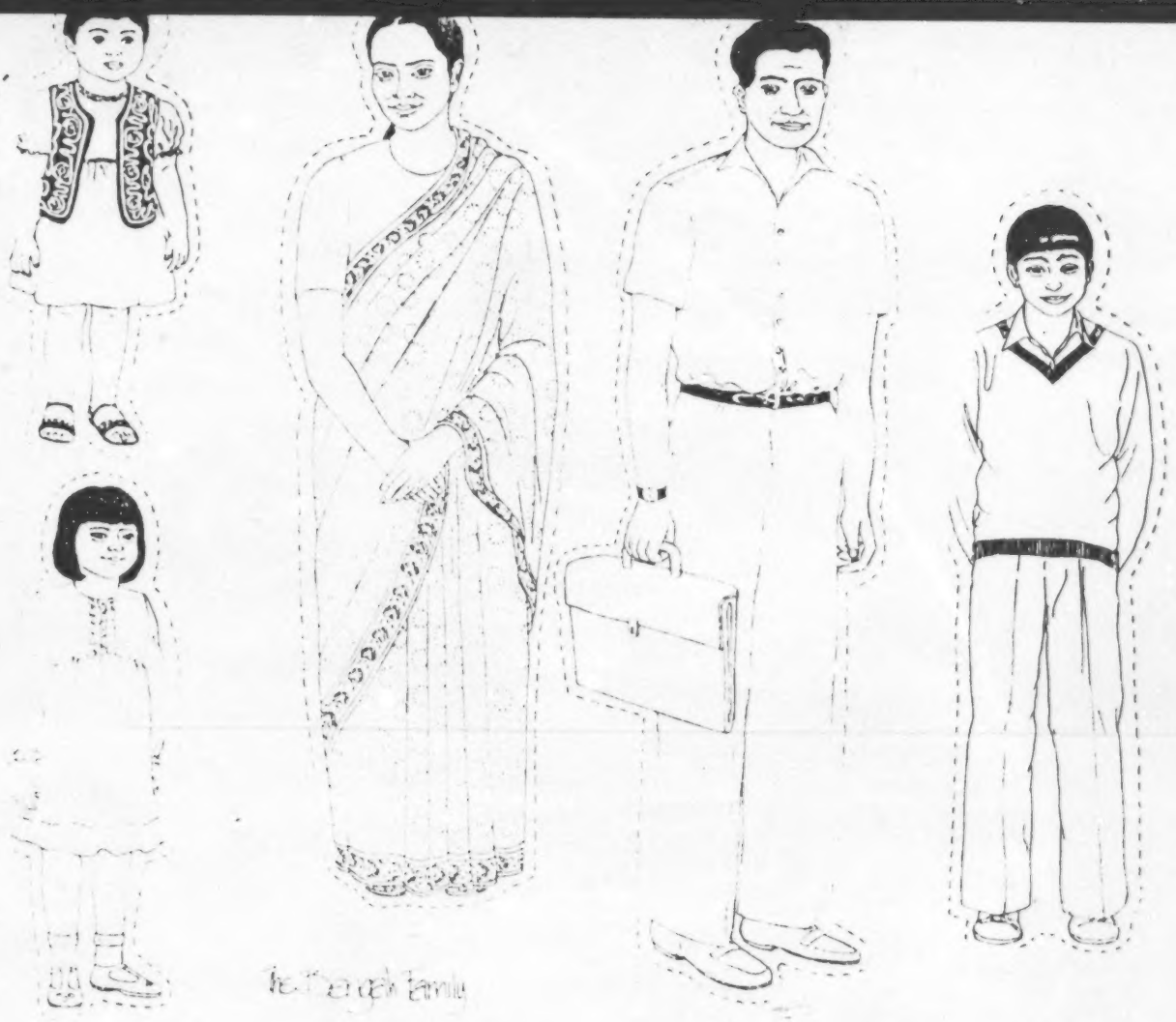
The project team have worked with teacher groups to produce exemplar materials, designed to be transferable for use with other languages. They are also producing guides for bilingual teachers of other languages who wish to develop their own materials.

The materials are designed to suit the needs of three stages which the project have identified for language learning.

pre-literacy
beginning literacy
extending literacy

They are also devised to cover four themes familiar to the children: Myself, Home, School, The Street.

The levels for which each element of the material is designed are shown in this list.



PROJECT-PRODUCED MATERIALS

The Picture Book

This book will have 15 pictures (with no text) illustrating various themes familiar to or of interest to children. The picture topics are: the home; your body; the street; the market; school; hospital; clothes; people at work; food; numbers; the playground; the town; the countryside; the seaside; a board game about road signs.

The Picture Book can be used in many ways with children of different ages, learning any language. It can also be used in ordinary mainstream classes as a multicultural resource.

The accompanying notes describe a wide variety of activities to help build up vocabulary, to teach and practise language structures, to link with story telling and discussion, to provide a starting point for writing.

Size: A4 double spreads
Extent: 32 pages

The Figurines

These models (the adult figures are about 27cm tall) depict four families 'living' in the neighbourhood of the Picture Book: A Greek and a Bengali family (both with grandparents); a West Indian family and a single parent English family.

The figurines can be used on their own or with the Picture Book for story telling and many other oral activities. They are presented as family sheets for the teacher to colour and mount for standing.

Other families could be devised using these as basic models.

The Story Book

The Story Book, too, can be used for a wide range of purposes in any language class to encourage both oral and written language. It will also be useful as a multicultural resource in all classes.

The book will have 15 stories told only in pictures. There are no words, but the teacher is provided with the text both in English and the mother tongue.

The stories are chosen from many of the cultures represented in Britain today.

The stories are chosen from many of the cultures represented in Britain today and include: The Fat Fox; The Tiger and the Old Man; The Birds and the Cake; The Tiger-Eating Animal (from Bangladesh and India); Hodja and the Baclavas; Hodja and the Donkey (from Turkey); The Hare and the Tortoise; The Fox and the Crane; Persephone (Greece); The Five Finger Mountain (Cyprus); Anansi and the Boat (West Africa and the Caribbean); Hengist and Horsa (Britain: Weighing an Elephant (China); Why there are so many Languages (Choctaw Indian); The Pot of Gold (Eire).

The accompanying teacher's notes suggest ways in which this material can be used. For example: story telling (both oral and written); as sequence cards; question, response and discussion.

Size: A4 landscape Extent: 32 pages

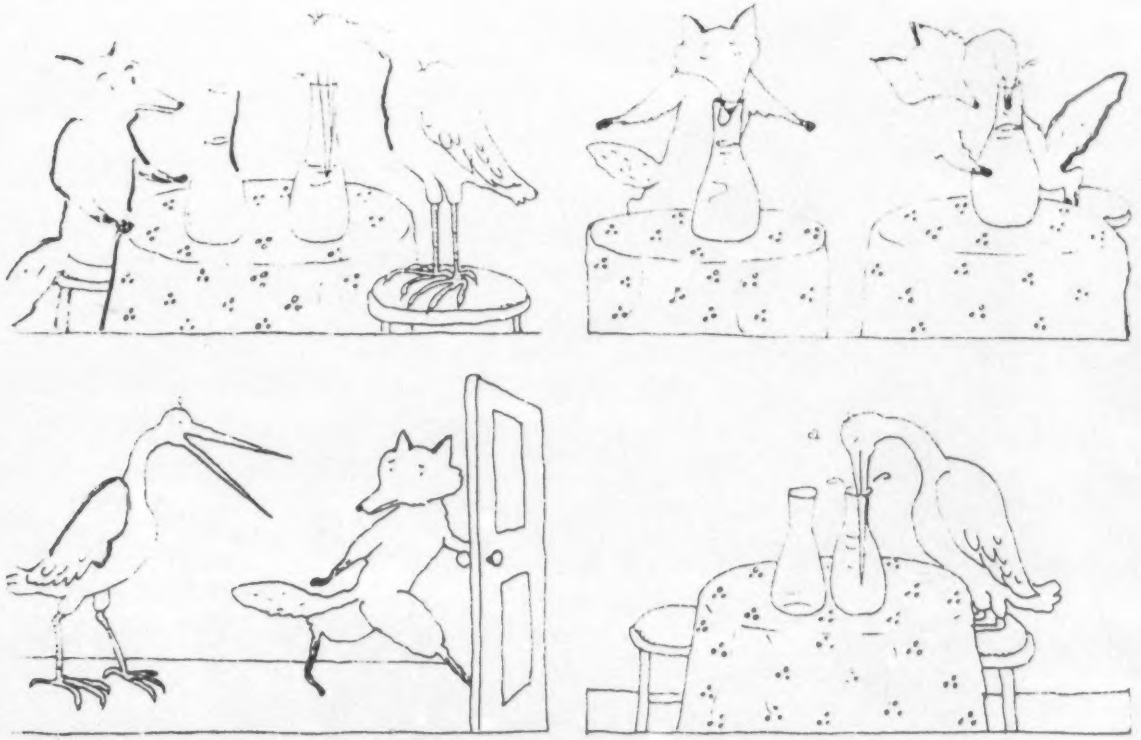
The Alphabet Sheets

These sheets, showing a number of words for each letter, can be used as a frieze or as individual letter sheets for the oracy and beginning literacy stages in Greek and Bengali. They are simple to devise for other languages.

Number Sheets or Friezes

For Greek, which has the same numerals as English, any number sheet so long as it is 'word-free' can be used. The trial schools are using Dick Bruna's Number Frieze (Methuen).

Number sheets for Bengali or other languages which use other numerals, can be devised in the same way as can alphabet sheets, or bought from shops importing books from Asia.



Να η Νίνα και η Νίκη
Η Νίνα έχει ένα νάνο
Η Νίκη έχει μια νεράιδα
Μια ιστορία γεμάτη για τον
νάνο μας παραπάνω
Μια ιστορία γεμάτη για
τη νεράιδα μας παραπάνω

The Phonic Readers

These books are for children acquiring early literacy skills. They have a basic story line and are designed to introduce children to the phonic features of their language. They assume that the children have already been introduced to the main sounds and symbols of the alphabet.

Bengali:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Book 1: | 32 pages | A5 |
| Book 2: | 24 pages | A5 |

Greek

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Book 1 and 2: | 20 pages | A5 |

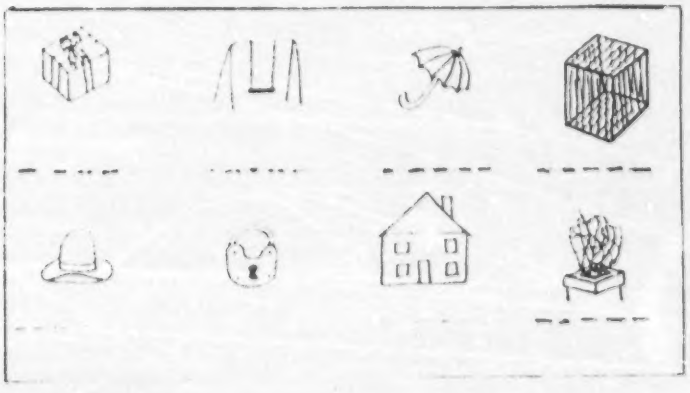
The Phonic Workbooks

These can be used in conjunction with the project's Phonic Readers or with other early literacy materials.

They reinforce and extend the early reading skills and gradually lead the children into written work.

Some activities include:

- letter formation and recognition
- picture/word matching
- sentence building
- phonic practice



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

These books can be used as exemplar by teachers of other languages wishing to construct similar early reading materials.

Greek
Book 1 and 2: 20 pages A4 landscape

Bengali
Book 1 and 2: 20 pages A4 portrait

The Readers

The Readers can be read aloud to the children or can be read by them. The reading level varies between about 7 and 9 years

All the Readers have been translated into Greek and Bengali for the trials and into English, so they can be considered by other language groups.

The fourteen Readers have been used during the trial period. They are:

Mamoon's First Day at School: A Bengali child's first day at primary school where he is helped by a Greek boy.

Dressing Up: Children dress up in clothes from different cultures, but one child feels left out.....

Marina's Christening: The story of the baby's christening as told by her cousin, Lakis.

Visitor Alice: A snake is brought into school for children to meet.

Andy's Toothache: Andy eats too many sweets and then he has toothache. The story of his visit to Dr Singh the Dentist.

Ranjat the Elephant: The adventures of an elephant who is taken off to perform in a circus.

The Best Bonfire in the World: Niki and her Bengali friend fisit Cyprus at Easter-tide.

The Outing: Roma and Alexis visit a farm with their school. The outing nearly ends in disaster.

নাসিমার মা স্কুলের মেলার জন্য
এক ব্যাগ পুরান কাপড় নিয়ে এলেন
নাসিমার টিচার বললেন, ধন্যবাদ
মিসেস হাসান।

1 ১

A Day in Athens: Michael meets his friend Jasmin in Athens and their two families spend the day together.

Auntie Rupa's Wedding

Sister Sarah's Wedding

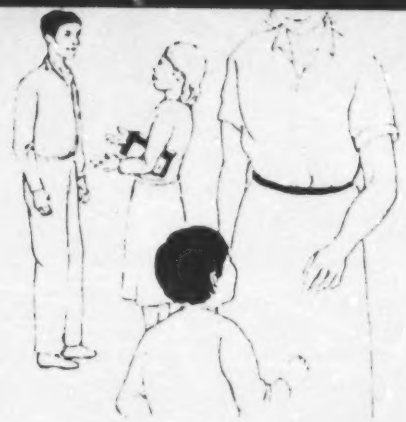
Meera's Wedding

These three stories are linked by the three girls who go to three weddings in their families: one is Muslim, one Hindu, and one Christian.

Aunt Niki's Wedding: A young boy's description of a Greek wedding day.

Asad's Id: Asad spent last Id in Bangladesh. This year he celebrates Id in London, and shares it with his friends from school.

Format: A5 12-32 pages.



Ο Μαμούν όμως ανησυχούσε. Κανένα δεν ήξερε. Μια κυρία οδήγησε τον Μαμούν και τον πατέρα του στην τάξη. Η δασκάλα του είπε:
Γειά σου Μαμούν. Λέγομαι κυρία Τζούνς. Έλα Μαμούν, να γνωρίσεις τα άλλα παιδιά.

Extension Reading Material

This material is for those children who have reached the stage where they can read with reasonable assurance. However, their level of comprehension ability may still be limited so that they do not fully understand all that they read.

The team have prepared sample activity sheets with a variety of exercises in sentence/word completion, identification of parts of speech, story writing and comprehension tasks to help the children through this stage.

Resource Packs

Each class in the trials has been given a resource pack. This includes an assortment of materials: poems, recipes, stories, etc. It is intended that the teacher will use this as a core for their own collection of material.

EXISTING PUBLISHED MATERIAL

In addition to the material created by the team, the trial schools have examples of books and kits produced originally for language development in English mother tongue classes. Some of this has been specially adapted to the trials. Included are:

Book boxes

Each trial class has been given £10 worth of books as a book box. The titles have been selected from those available in Britain. It also includes some bilingual books in both English and the mother tongue from Bangladesh, West Bengal, Greece and Cyprus.

Breakthrough to Literacy (Longman)

Each class has a set of the Breakthrough Sentence Maker with words in the appropriate language. These have been reproduced on the blank cards which are available from the publisher. They are used when literacy is being introduced.

Some of the Breakthrough Readers which link with the project's four themes and have a suitable multicultural background have been translated by the team. Stick-on sheets have been provided so that the teachers can convert these books into Greek or Bengali readers.

These are used to supplement the project's own Readers in encouraging reading fluency.

Terraced House; 'Other Language Sheets' (Methuen).

The publishers of these early readers, with a strong multicultural, urban thread in their colourful photographic illustrations, have translated the text into a number of mother tongues.

The publishers have provided adhesive sheets with which the teacher can convert the books either fully to the mother tongue or, as the project has done, to bilingual readers in which the child can read the text both in English and the other language. (Orders to Schools Promotion Unit, Methuen Educational Ltd, North Way, Andover, Hants, enclosing £3 for 16 texts.)

Language for Learning

These text-free language development activities, developed by ILEA's Language Materials Service, are published by ILEA and by Heinemann Educational elsewhere. They provide an example of text-free material which is equally useful for the development of any language.

Unit 1: Classifications Unit 2: Story telling; Unit 3: Inquire and eliminate; Unit 4: List, discuss and do; Unit 5: Compare and enquire; Unit 6: Description. (Orders to Heinemann Educational or, within ILEA, to the Learning Materials Service.)

Traditional Greek Buildings

A pack from which, following the instructions in Greek, pupils can build a model Greek building.

Available from: Schema Paper Models, 36 Westbridge Road, London SW11.

Teacher's Book

The Teacher's Book for the Mother Tongue material gives suggestions for how the materials may be used in a great variety of ways.

Look: No Words!

The team are building up a catalogue of material which is readily available and is 'text-free' so that it can be used for language development work in any language. The catalogue will make suggestions about how items can be used in mother tongue teaching.

The project team would welcome any information about material which might be included in the catalogue with suggestions for its use.

Test Materials

As part of the evaluation of the project, tests are being carried out to see what effect the trial teaching is having on pupil's oracy and literacy progress both in the mother tongue and in English.

Oracy tests which can be adapted to any language have been devised in which a story is told with props and the children are asked to retell the story.

The oracy test stories are:
The Tiger in the Market (developed by ILEA staff and CUES) with props and figurines;
The Lost Parrot (with figurines);
Sparkie the Robot (whose programme for housework goes awry) with sequence cards;
Treasure in Space (about astronauts finding buried treasure) with sequence cards.

Cloze procedure is being used in the reading test with stories in Bengali, Greek and English.

EVALUATION REPORTS

There will be reports recording the working of the project both from the project evaluator and from the EEC.

THE CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE PROJECT

This is the provisional title of a series of activity cards. They are the outcome of a joint venture involving the Mother Tongue project and the Linguistic Minorities project.

They are designed to encourage children to investigate their own patterns of language use, as well as the languages they encounter around them.

There are five cards, each with a theme: the origins of language; language in the neighbourhood; languages at school; languages at home; languages around the world. They are being tried out by teachers in Bradford, Haringey and Waltham Forest.

You can talk to your class about what you saw.
Do you know what language this is?
It says 'How old are you?'
That's Urdu. I'm learning to write that.

The Project Evaluator, Paula Tansley, writes about the trial period:

THE SCHOOLS The project worked with 12 mainstream schools and 11 community mother tongue schools. The mainstream schools comprised 5 schools, mainly in Haringey, where Greek mother tongue teaching was carried out and 7 schools, in the Tower Hamlets area of ILEA, where Bengali mother tongue teaching took place, covering both infant and junior age ranges.
The community schools were chosen as far as possible to represent the wide range of provision that already exists; so that for the Greek schools both church schools and those organised by the Greek Parents Association were selected and for the Bengali schools a mosque school and a school attended by pupils from West Bengali were chosen.

THE CLASSES in the community schools the project work was slotted into ongoing programmes although in some cases groups of children were selected to work specifically with the project's materials. In some mainstream schools, however, classes had to be specially set up for the work to take place.

Two models of organisation were tried:

- the integrated model, where the mother tongue teacher works in the mainstream classroom alongside the mainstream teacher;

- the withdrawal model, where the mother tongue teacher takes children out of the mainstream class and works with them in a separate room.

In the mainstream schools a total of four hours teaching time (frequently spread over two groups) plus one hour's liaison time was allocated.

THE TEACHERS Again teachers were chosen to represent a variety of backgrounds so that Greek teachers included teachers from the Greek Embassy, the Cyprus High Commission, unqualified teachers and a mainstream teacher. Bengali teachers included both Sylheti and West Bengal speakers, qualified and unqualified teachers and again mainstream teachers.

THE CHILDREN Teachers worked with groups (maximum 12) of children which they frequently subdivided according to language competence, from children who spoke little English to those who spoke little of their mother tongue. A few English-only speaking children formed part of the Greek mother tongue class in one school. The children's ages ranged between 6 and 11 years.

THE WORK Teachers were given a package of project materials to use, designed to cover both oracy and literacy in the mother tongue. In addition they collaborated with mainstream teachers on many occasions over project work, topics, stories etc.

OUTCOMES Some outcomes have been:

- increased confidence and motivation amongst the project children;
- stronger links between parents and schools;
- increased status of minority languages;
- greater language awareness in general;
- better understanding between mainstream and mother tongue teachers.

Eventually it is hoped to publish a detailed case study report of the trial period.

## THE NEXT STEP

Now that the materials have been exposed to classroom use they are being revised in the light of teachers' and children's observations. Our next step, then, is to establish contact with publishers who may be interested in making the materials commercially available. This will be done through a trawl of educational and community publishers, leading to a meeting of interested parties early in the Autumn term.

Readers will know from their own experience that there is little tradition in Britain of publishing materials in community languages other than Welsh. We are, therefore, in unknown territory. But we are hopeful that our contact with publishers will demonstrate the need for such materials and will eventually lead to us finding a channel for publication and distribution.

## OTHER LANGUAGES

Although Bengali and Greek are major languages in the London area, at a national level they are just two among many community languages. Indeed in some areas of Britain they are spoken by only a small proportion of the ethnic minority population.

So it is important that bilingual teachers of other languages should be able to draw upon our work and feel that our materials have some application for them. With this in mind, for some months we have been working closely with Ana Santos of the Portuguese Consulate, whose teachers have been using adapted versions of our materials in their own community schools.

We have also received detailed advice from Ralph Russell and members of the National Working Party on Urdu teaching.

We are now reaching out to teachers of other community languages. Several LEAs have agreed to help. They have received copies of our materials and over the next few months will be giving us feedback on how the materials have been used by bilingual teachers in their areas. This will culminate in a Working Conference in December which will prepare a guide to advise bilingual teachers generally on how they might develop resources to meet their own teaching needs.

*"A display of numbers in Urdu script provoked a very positive response from the children. They came to tell me which numbers they could read and began to record numbers in other languages. Whilst making some number games using Gujarati, Punjabi Urdu and English, a group of nine year olds proficient in these languages began to show a great interest in each others' languages and to teach each other."*

*"Two groups have recently recorded information about themselves on tape in Gujarati, Urdu, Pushtu and Bengali, and were not self-conscious about speaking in their mother tongue in front of me. I particularly liked the way in which these groups worked so well together. If any child was not sure of the Urdu or Gujarati word the other children would help him or her out."*

*"One way in which the whole school shares an interest in language variation is through music. The school meets together once a week for singing and music-making, using songs and music from a variety of cultural traditions. Songs with simple repetitive lines in different languages feature regularly."*

These are some teachers' statements that appear in the pilot version of our handbook - *"Teaching in the Multilingual Classroom"*. It is aimed at teachers in multilingual primary schools who do not nessarily speak their pupils' home languages, but who wish to give more recognition to these as part of their day-to-day classroom practice.

Trials of the handbook are now beginning and will continue until late November of this year. A total of 22 Local Education Authorities around the country are assisting us during this trial period. For further information about the work of any of these trial groups the Co-ordinators can be contacted at the addresses on the following pages.

Already there is a great deal of interest in the handbook but, as it is still at the pilot stage, we are unable to make copies available to readers who are not involved with one of the local groups. However, we would always be happy to supply more detailed information on receipt of a S.A.E. and an indication of your specific area of interest.